What is vocabulary?

*Vocabulary can be broken down equally into* ***form****,* ***meaning*** *and* ***use****.*

*The* ***form*** *of a word is the spelling of a word. If we are looking for the form of the word ‘play’ then the form would be ‘p-l-a-y’.*

*The* ***meaning*** *of a word is the definition of the word. If we are looking for the meaning of ‘play’ then we would play a game, look at a picture of children playing or find its definition, ‘to do something you enjoy’. Some words, like ‘play’ have many meanings.*

*The* ***use*** *of a word is speaking or writing the word appropriately. Use is about choice. There can be many uses of a word and development of use comes from practice and real-life situations, like a classroom, a museum, or the playground. The word ‘play’ has many meanings and therefore many uses. ‘I like to play with my friends.’ And ‘I went to the play Peter Pan last week.’ Show how ‘play’ can be used as a verb or a noun.*

*When learning* ***content area vocabulary*** *in the mainstream classroom, we* ***focus on the meaning and the use****, not the form.*

*When playing games with* ***content area vocabulary****, be sure that materials have* ***visuals****. Pictures can come from books, magazines, making your own illustrations or printing images from the web.*

**What are some ways I can help at home?**

1. Check out the **Grade 1 ESL website**! There you can find the Grade 1 newsletter that updates you on the concepts your child is learning. The Grade 1 website also has links to many vocabulary games.
2. **Talk** about the vocabulary and concepts related to the vocabulary your child is learning in school in your **first language**. Take **field trips**!
3. **Read** ‘just right’ books and books about the topics we study in school.
4. **Hands-on activities** that allow your child to revisit the vocabulary several times and in many different ways.

*Your child learns new vocabulary in science, math, social studies, reading and writing each day. It is our expectation that your child understand these words; that they be able to understand what is meant when they hear them and that they be able to communicate about them with their teachers and peers.*

**Hands-on Activities Materials: Only 2 sets of vocabulary cards!**

**Guess which one is missing?** Choose 3-4 vocabulary cards and place them face-up. Look at the cards and talk about them. Have your child close his/her eyes. Remove 1-2 cards. When your child opens his/her eyes ask ‘Guess which one is missing?’

**Oh no!** Place vocabulary cards in a bag with a few extra cards that say ‘Oh no!’. Pass the bag around. As each person takes a card out, they say the word, talk about it, and keep it. If a person pulls out an ‘Oh no!’ card, they have to put all of their words back in the bag.

**Memory** This requires 2 sets of matching vocabulary cards. Mix them up, turn them upside down and arrange them in rows, not to be reorganized again. Each player turns flipping over 2 cards, saying and talking about the word as they play. If the 2 cards match, the pair is kept.